

Guidelines for writing theses for Master's and Bachelor's degrees

Institute of Law, University of Natural and Life Sciences, Vienna

1. General information

Students writing a thesis at our Institute should prove their ability to make an independent examination of a legal question at a scientific level.

2. Requirements for writing a thesis

- a. Students should have a general interest in legal questions with reference to the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences.
- b. Students who already have completed additional courses at the Institute of Law (e.g. seminars or additional lectures) will be preferred for supervision over those who have not.

3. Formal procedure

- a. **Preparation:** Prior to commencing a thesis it is necessary to clarify whether supervision at the Institute of Law is possible. Please make sure that a supervisor with the relevant scientific focus is actually working at the Institute. Supervision can only be provided by a habilitated scholar.
- b. **Exposé:** Prior to the informational interview a short exposé (maximum three pages) is to be prepared. The research question, the intended content of the thesis, and a provisional table of contents should be included. Please consider how the research question can be reasonably explained and how it can be divided and structured into sub-questions. Please do consider a logical order. Writing and legibility are facilitated by a clearly defined framework.
- c. **Supervision agreement:** After confirmation of the identity of the supervisor, the agreement is to be signed.
- d. **Timeframe:** The timeframe is to be agreed upon with the supervisor.
- e. **Supervision meetings:** Regular supervision meetings during the writing of the thesis are to be arranged individually.
- f. **Submission:**
 - The cover sheet should include:
 - A header "Master' Thesis" or "Bachelor's Thesis";
 - The title of the thesis;
 - The name of the supervisor;
 - The name of the author;
 - The matriculation number;
 - University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna – Institute of Law.
 - Affidavit.
 - Abstract in English.
 - The final version of the thesis is to be submitted in hardcover as well as digitally to the supervisor.

4. Textual requirements for the thesis

a. **Research:** It is recommended that you carry out thorough research and address the relevant legal situation as well as the literature and the relevant case law.

b. **Problem analysis and solution:** What problems would you like to solve concerning your research question and how would you like to solve them? Which aspects pose no problems? How will you overcome the problems and ambiguities? Does the relevant literature address your question adequately? Do you consider the solutions offered by the literature to be convincing? If not, why have you come to that conclusion and how would you solve the problem in a better way? Could an adjustment of the legal situation or of the judicature be necessary?

c. **Conclusion:** Based on your research question you should present your insights on the basis of the outline of your thesis in a well-structured, clear and reasonable way.

5. Formal requirements for the thesis:

- At the beginning, a **table of contents** should include all the outline levels including the number of pages.
- The **outline levels** have to follow a coherent structure. You should not use more than four outline levels and each section should have at least two subdivision sections. Your thesis must include an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.
- If you use abbreviations, a **list of abbreviations** should be included, following the table of contents.
- After the textual part a **bibliography** listing all cited sources should complete the thesis.
- Font size: 11pt.
- Font: Arial or Times New Roman; justification.
- Number of pages: A Bachelor's thesis should comprise at least 20 pages, and a Master's thesis should comprise at least 60-80 pages.

6. Citation method:

- Citations are to be given in **footnotes**.
- Each footnote should start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. First citations are to be written in full; subsequent citations are to be listed as short-form citations.
- You may use any common citation format as long as it complies with scientific standards and is applied consistently and coherently. If you use **legal citations** please use The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (<https://www.legalbluebook.com/>)
- Your work may not contain **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is understood as an act of representing the thoughts of another person as one's own thoughts without crediting the original author.
- Changes of individual words or the word order do not qualify as one's own text. An accurate citation of the source is indispensable.
- Theses including plagiarism will be assessed negatively.

7. Language

Please respect grammar and spelling rules as well as comma rules. Legal terminology can lead

to difficult phrasing. Legibility is thus complicated. You should avoid multi-clause sentences but make use of clear and comprehensible language.